



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

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Mayor

Outdoor Dining Assistance Program

Program Guidelines

The Economic Development Division of the Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development manages the Outdoor Dining Assistance program to provide businesses with forgivable loans up to \$10,000 in reimbursable expenses to be used towards the design, construction, and implementation of outdoor dining spaces. The goal of this program is to alleviate the financial impacts of implementing an outdoor dining setup in compliance with local and state safety and accessibility standards. For businesses who have not previously held an outdoor dining license, or that face additional barriers to procuring design services, the outdoor dining assistance program offers in-house professional design assistance.

There are two categories of assistance available:

Category	Award Amount	Type of Award
Outdoor Dining Forgivable Loan Program	Up to \$10,000	Forgivable Loan
In-house Design Assistance Program	In-kind	Technical Assistance

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

- **In-house Design Professional Assistance**
 - Business must not have held an outdoor dining license in 2020 or 2021
- **Forgivable Loan Reimbursement:**
 - Business must be a brick-and-mortar restaurant
 - Must be an outdoor dining license holder in 2022
 - Must be a Somerville based business
 - The business must have been operating in Somerville prior to October 1st, 2021
 - Must be in good standing with City and State licensing bodies.
 - Applicant must submit a completed application before the deadline.

Revised 3/10/2022

Ineligible Applicants

The following applicants will not be considered for an award:

- Sole proprietors without a brick & mortar location.
- Businesses with past-due tax liabilities, tax liens, or who have filed for bankruptcy.
- Franchisees of regional or national chains who own three or more franchises.

Timeline

The assistance program takes place between March 10th and September 1st, 2022.

- March 10th, 2022: Application for in-house design assistance and outdoor dining reimbursement opens.
- April 1st, 2022: Outdoor dining begins.
- September 1st, 2022: Assistance Program application deadline.

Eligible Use of Funds

Businesses may apply up to \$10,000 towards professional design services, materials, construction, & outdoor furniture expenses. All expenses must have been incurred after March 10th, 2022. Local and State licensing fees are not an eligible use of funds.

Application Process

- **In-house Design Professional Assistance**
 1. Applicant submits application for in house design professional services.
 2. OSPCD staff reviews the application and assigns an available design consultant to provide licensed drawings needed to receive an outdoor dining license. This step may take up to 6 weeks to begin assistance, based on the availability of a design professional.
 3. If the business is ineligible for in house dining assistance, business is referred to list of available design professional firms available online and is still eligible for reimbursement program.
 4. Design professional and applicant determine a schedule to survey the outdoor dining site and submit an ODD (Outdoor Dining) license application to the City through Citizen Serve, and briefs OSPCD staff.
 5. Assistance covers the aspects of the licensing process where stamped drawings are required. The assistance program does not include licensing representation, construction, or installation aspects of outdoor dining space.
 6. After ODD license is granted and outdoor seating is operational, the applicant follows reimbursement procedure below.
 7. The cost to complete design drawings with an in-house design professional will be deducted from the business's forgivable loan. For example, a business that receives stamped drawings from an in-house design professional at a cost of \$2500, will be eligible to receive up to \$7500 in outdoor dining reimbursement expenses.
- **Forgivable Loan Reimbursement.**
 1. Business applies for outdoor dining reimbursement after all services have been rendered and outdoor dining is set up. Submission documents include but are not limited to:
 - a. W-9

- b. Proof of payment documentation in the form of a cancelled check or detailed credit card statement.
 - c. Contract agreement, invoice with licensed design professional, contractor, and/or permitting expeditor.
 - d. Receipts for purchases made towards outdoor furniture, tables, chairs, lighting, planters, truck rental, or other outdoor dining materials.
2. Reviewed by OSPCD staff.
3. Loan agreement is created and sent to business owner for review and signature.
4. Business owner returns loan agreement signed, and loan begins multi departmental review.
5. A check is mailed out 6-8 weeks later.
6. Once applicant meets all program requirements detailed in loan agreement, loan discharge letter is sent.

Until these conditions are met, the loan must be paid back. If at any point it is revealed the applicant has provided misleading or incorrect information, the City reserves the right to disqualify the applicant and the application.

Questions

- **Ask questions by email:** Contact Nick Schonberger, Program Coordinator at nschonberger@somervillema.gov for more information, details, or clarification.
- **Attend an Outdoor Dining Program Virtual Review Session:**
 - **Permitting For Design Professionals:** March 10th, 2 pm – 3 pm. [Register here.](#)
 - **Outdoor Dining Program Review – English-** March 17th 2 pm – 3 pm. [Register here.](#)
 - **Outdoor Dining Program Review – Spanish-** March 18th, 3 pm – 4 pm. [Register here.](#)
 - **Outdoor Dining Program Review – Portuguese-** March 22nd, 2 pm – 3 pm. [Register here.](#)
- **Attend Virtual Drop-in Office Hours on 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month, 3 pm – 4 pm.**
Translation assistance is available. [Register here.](#)
 - Submit your question ahead of time [here.](#)
- Drop-in office hours will be held on:
 - March 17th
 - April 7th
 - April 21st

Program Status

Funds are limited and the City reserves the right to discontinue or modify requirements and funding for the program. Note that filling out an application for the program does not imply that funding for the applicant is available or that the applicant is automatically approved. Funding must be approved by the City and a contract signed between the parties. Expenses incurred prior to March 10th, 2022 are not eligible expenses.

The City of Somerville has the right to reject the Outdoor Dining Forgivable Loan application or terminate any agreement if a participant is found to be in violation of any conditions set forth in these guidelines. OSPCD reserves the right to make adjustments regarding conditions and parameters outlined in these guidelines.